

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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12/02/2012	The history of fracking	Knoxville News-Sentinel - Online, The
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12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	WBNS-TV - Online
12/01/2012	Producers of natural gas turn to 'green completion'	Athens Banner-Herald - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	KFOX-TV - Online
12/01/2012	Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices	Four Corners Business Journal - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	Middletown Journal - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	WTOV-TV - Online
12/01/2012	NY fracking report expected to be completed by Monday	Newsday - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	WSB-TV - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	WFTV-TV - Online
12/01/2012	NY fracking report expected to finish soon	Newsday AP
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	Seattle Post-Intelligencer
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	KTVU-TV - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	Courier-Post - Online
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12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	WJAC-TV - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	Newsday - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of New York study on health, environment and fracking soon to be complete	Daily Journal - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of New York study on health, environment and fracking soon to be complete	Republic - Online, The
12/01/2012	Natural gas producers are turning to new	The Gulf Today

techniques to capture the gas emitted during the well-completion process.

12/01/2012	Greening up gas fields	Register-Guard - Online
12/01/2012	Farm bill key front in staying EPA's hand	FarmWeek - Online
12/01/2012	Update on fracking action at statehouse	Vindicator - Online
12/01/2012	Lawmakers fear Kathleen Sebelius taking aim at natural gas boom	Washington Examiner - Online
12/01/2012	Myriad fracking secrets keep Americans clueless on wells	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online
12/01/2012	Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete	Associated Press (AP) - New York City Bureau
12/01/2012	MYRIAD FRACKING SECRETS KEEP AMERICANS CLUELESS ON WELLS	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
12/01/2012	Trade-secret rules weaken fracking law; Texas allows exemptions from disclosure	Edmonton Journal, The

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Coughing, Headaches, Fatigue: Is Fracking to Blame? Public News Service - Online

12/03/2012

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Coughing, Headaches, Fatigue: Is Fracking to Blame?

December 3, 2012

COLUMBUS, Ohio - As hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" spreads throughout the Buckeye State, so do questions about its affects on health. The process involves using water and sand mixed with chemicals to fracture shale formations and unlock reservoirs of oil and gas.

The president of the Greene County Medical Association, Dr. Deborah Cowden, says throughout the fracking process, hazardous air emissions are released from multiple sources. They can cause respiratory problems, blood disorders and neurological symptoms, she explains.

"That can includes headache, horrible fatigue, people fainting. Fainting is a huge issue - it means your brain has shut down because of the level of toxicity that is hitting it. You can get convulsions. You can get temporary limb paralysis."

Cowden cites a study from the Colorado School of Public Health that found air pollution caused by fracking may contribute to acute and chronic health problems for those living near natural-gas drilling sites. Cowden has been traveling the state to discuss the findings and says stronger regulations are needed to protect the public's health.

Emissions from fracking waste, which is often stored underground in injection wells, are also of concern. Mount Gilead nurse Donna Carver says more than a dozen permitted wells have been drilled near her home in Morrow County. As a concerned citizen, she has done her own research and says she was physically affected while visiting one particular injection site.

"My nose started to burn, my eyes got really itchy, my skin got itchy, I had difficulty breathing, I got very nauseous, I started vomiting, I had a horrible headache and for about three or four days afterwards I was still sick from the effects of whatever I was exposed to."

More than 170 injection sites are active in Ohio. Carver contends they are not properly monitored or regulated. She is among the Ohioans who are fighting permits for new injection wells in their communities.

As part of a two-year monitoring project, the Ohio EPA says early data collected near a shale-gas drilling well shows the air remains clean.

The Colorado study is available at ScienceDirect .

Mary Kuhlman, Public News Service - OH

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Natural gas producers turn to 'green completion' Jefferson Gazette

12/02/2012

Natural gas producers turn to 'green completion'

SYCAMORE, Pa. _ The towering flares that turn night into day in the Marcellus Shale gaslands are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

Natural gas producers are turning to new techniques to capture the gas emitted during the well-completion process. In the past, a well's initial production was typically vented or burned off to allow impurities to clear before the well was tied into a pipeline.

Now, more operators are employing reduced-emission completions _ a "green completion" _ a process in which impurities such as sand, drilling debris, and fluids from hydraulic fracturing are filtered out and the gas is sold, not wasted.

The five gas wells that EQT Corp. completed in October at this remote site in Washington Township, Pa., are typical. Compared to a gas flare, which roars like a jet engine and licks the sky with flame like a giant welder's torch, green completion is dull and quiet.

EQT is not the only drilling company that has embraced green completions. The equipment for separating the gas from the "flowback" has been perfected in the past decade, and in the next three years, using it will become standard practice across the nation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved new rules this year requiring green completions nationwide by 2015, except for exploratory wells unconnected to pipelines. As of Oct. 15, drillers can no longer vent the gas into the atmosphere without burning.

The EPA says green completions will save drillers up to \$19 million a year by capturing natural gas that would be wasted.

The advent of green completions is an example of the rapid development of shale-gas technology, which has revived a flagging domestic energy sector in just a few years.

"What was true yesterday is no longer true today," said Andrew Place, director of public policy research at EQT, based in Pittsburgh. "Systems are evolving."

Much of the new technology has been driven to address fears about drilling, including hydraulic fracturing, the extraction technique that has turned impermeable shale into a bonanza of oil and gas.

"Public concerns have pushed the engineers to come up with solutions," Place said.

Activists and regulators are paying more attention to air emissions from shale-gas development, including toxins emitted during drilling and production. Much of the focus has been on releases of methane, the main component of natural gas as well as a potent greenhouse gas, though there is substantial disagreement over studies attempting to measure the methane leaks.

In devising the new rules, the EPA said it was acting under its Clean Air Act mandate to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds and pollutants such as benzene, which can cause cancer. The agency said the new rules were

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expected to eliminate 95 percent of the smog-forming volatile organic compounds emitted from more than 13,000 new gas wells each year.

The EPA said a "co-benefit" of green completions was a reduction in methane emissions by 1 million to 1.7 million tons a year.

The government delayed full implementation of the rule until 2015 to allow the industry to build enough equipment to handle the workload.

The American Petroleum Institute and other industry groups are challenging the new rules in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington. So are environmental groups.

"We'd say the rules have not gone far enough," said Jay Duffy, a staff attorney with Philadelphia's Clean Air Council, which joined with Earthjustice in October to notify the EPA it planned to sue.

Duffy praised the EPA for taking action to curb toxic emissions from drilling, but he contends the federal agency failed to directly confront the climate-change issue. The EPA concluded in 2009 that greenhouse gases endangered public health and welfare, but it has not devised standards on methane emissions.

Anti-drilling activists argue that so much methane escapes from gas development it undermines the industry's claims about the clean-air benefits of the shale-gas boom.

The industry says environmentalists and the EPA are using inflated, biased estimates of methane emissions. It has denounced as hoaxes some of the infrared videos posted online that purport to show methane plumes.

Some industry leaders say the biggest benefit to green-completion technology is that they hope it puts the emissions controversy to rest.

"I do think it addresses a criticism that the industry has had in terms of methane emissions, and maybe we can take that off the table," Jack P. Williams Jr., president of XTO Energy, said in a recent interview.

EQT differs from many gas-exploration companies because it also serves a retail customer base through its gas utility in southwestern Pennsylvania, Equitable Gas Co. It says green completions achieve a significant emission reduction.

"EQT has an interest in minimizing our impact, our air impact in this case, in the basin where we have a social license to operate," said Place, a deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection before he went to work for EQT.

"We've been here for 120 years," he said. "We live in this community."

At EQT's drilling site on Pettit Run Road in rolling farmland about seven miles northwest of Waynesburg, Pa., workers explained the kind of assembly-line drilling operation they have devised that now incorporates green completions.

Before EQT began drilling on this five-acre site carved out of a hillside, the company first extended its pipeline network to the location so it would be ready to receive any gas produced, said Michael Rehl, manager of completion operations.

During the spring, the five wells were drilled in a row, 15 feet apart, to a depth of about 7,500 feet, where they turn horizontally into the Marcellus Shale layer and follow parallel paths, separated by about 1,000 feet. Then the wells were lined with several layers of steel pipe and concrete, and hydraulically fractured.

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The completion process commenced in October when a contractor, Pure Energy Services Ltd., began cleaning out wells one at a time.

At the outset, a well disgorges mostly sand, water, and chemicals used during the fracking process, along with drilling debris and minerals such as barium and manganese picked up from the shale formation. After about four days, the well produces mostly natural gas.

During a green completion, the mixture is routed through a series of filters. A cylindrical sand trap collects the solid materials, which are sent to a landfill. The water, containing the chemicals and mineral contaminants, is treated and stored for reuse in the next drilling operation.

And the natural gas is channeled into a pipeline and sent off to market, rather than being flared into the sky to achieve no other purpose than to heat the planet.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

**Natural gas production getting greener
Fort Worth Star-Telegram - Online**

12/02/2012

Life & Arts

Natural gas production getting greener

A

By Andrew Maykuth

The Philadelphia Inquirer

SYCAMORE, Pa. -- The towering flares that turn night into day in the Marcellus Shale are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

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Now, more operators are employing reduced-emission completions -- a "green completion" -- a process in which impurities such as sand, drilling debris, and fluids from hydraulic fracturing are filtered out and the gas is sold, not wasted.

In North Texas' Barnett Shale, where years of drilling and development has installed a wide network of pipelines, most wells already use low-emission completions. For example, Devon Energy, the field's largest producer, said this year that "well over 90 percent" of its wells used green completions, and the Barnett Shale Energy Education Council, an industry group, said they are widely employed.

The Environmental Protection Agency approved new rules this year requiring green completions nationwide by 2015, except for exploratory wells unconnected to pipelines. And as of Oct. 15, drillers must flare methane rather than vent it.

The EPA says green completions will save drillers up to \$19 million a year by capturing natural gas that would be wasted.

"What was true yesterday is no longer true today," said Andrew Place, director of public policy research at EQT Corp., based in Pittsburgh. "Systems are evolving."

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"I do think it addresses a criticism that the industry has had in terms of methane emissions, and maybe we can take that off the table," Jack P. Williams Jr., president of Fort Worth-based XTO Energy, said in a recent interview.

This report includes material from the Star-Telegram archives.

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**The history of fracking
Knoxville News-Sentinel - Online, The**

12/02/2012

Knoxville News Sentinel

1860s: Liquid first used to stimulate shallow, hard rock wells in Pennsylvania, New York, Kentucky and West Virginia.

1930s: Idea of injecting a nonexplosive fluid into the ground to stimulate a well began to be attempted.

1947: Hydraulic fracturing introduced by Stanolind Oil.

1976: The Department of Energy launches the Eastern Gas Shales Project, a joint research project among state, federal and private industrial organizations to research "unconventional" natural gas resources.

1980s: Horizontal drilling first combined with hydraulic fracturing in a frack job in north Texas.

1986: As part of an early federal effort to investigate new methods of extracting natural gas, the Department of Energy sponsors the drilling of 2,000-foot horizontal well in the Devonian Shales of Wayne County, W.Va.

1998: Present-day form of hydraulic fracturing is first used in the Barnett Shale in Texas. Formerly inaccessible gas reservoirs are now open for fracking.

June 2004: EPA report says fracking fluids are toxic and that some portion of these toxic fluids remain in the ground after a frack job. However, the report concludes "injection of hydraulic fracturing fluids into coal bed methane wells poses "little or no threat" to drinking water supplies.

August 2005: Congress passes a law prohibiting the EPA from regulating fracking under the Safe Drinking Water Act. In most other cases the law dictates what chemicals can be injected underground.

June 2009: U.S. House of Representatives introduces the Fracking Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act to repeal fracking's exemption from the SDWA. The act never came to a vote.

February 2010: The House Committee on Energy and Commerce launches an investigation into the potential environmental and health impacts of fracking.

November 2011: By request of the U.S. Congress, the EPA issues a Plan to Study the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing on Drinking Water Resources, to be completed by 2014.

Source: "Hydraulic Fracturing: History of an Enduring Technology," propublica.org

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UT plans to drill for gas on its land, study fracking

Questions raised about industry, academia relationship

The history of fracking

Editorial: UT fracking deal has both pitfalls and potential

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Experts' review of fracking/health study due Monday
Corning Leader - Online, The

12/02/2012

Experts' review of fracking/health study due Monday

By Mary Esch

The Associated Press

Posted Dec 01, 2012 @ 07:05 PM

Albany, N.Y. -

Experts reviewing the health effects of shale gas development in New York are among the nation's most prominent in environmental health, giving opponents hope but the industry concern that reviewers will warn against drilling operations that use hydraulic fracturing.

The state has had a moratorium on "fracking" for shale gas since the Department of Environmental Conservation started an environmental impact study in 2008. The department released proposed new regulations Wednesday stemming from the study and will take public comment before making them final.

The health review is expected to be completed by Monday.

At least one of the health experts said that while she's aware some things have gone wrong in communities with shale gas drilling, the health and environmental damage from using gas for heat and fuel may not be as bad as burning coal.

"We know that emissions from burning coal cause tremendous damage to health," Lynn Goldman of George Washington University said in an interview with The Associated Press. "A decision not to frack is a decision to use more coal."

Health professionals and environmental groups in New York called on the Cuomo administration to do a comprehensive health impact study. But DEC Commissioner Joe Martens decided instead to have the state health department and outside experts review the analysis done by the Department of Environmental Conservation in coming up with the new rules.

State Health Commissioner Nirav Shah chose Goldman, Richard Jackson and John Adgate to conduct the review. Goldman is dean of George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services. Jackson is chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California Los Angeles School of Public Health. Adgate chairs the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at the University of Colorado School of Public Health.

All three experts raised red flags for the industry group Energy In Depth. The group sent a letter to Shah saying previous work and statements by them showed anti-fracking bias.

"While voicing concerns is an understandable and at times necessary function of scientific progress, these experts have chosen to make statements that contradict well established scientific conclusions about both hydraulic fracturing and shale development," Energy In Depth Executive Director Lee Fuller wrote.

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In fracking, millions of gallons of chemically treated water is injected into wells to break up the underground shale and release the gas. Regulators and the industry say the method is safe when done according to rules set by the states. But environmental groups and some scientists say not enough research has been done on air and water contamination or other health and environmental issues.

Goldman, who also is an Environmental Defense Fund trustee, said she brings no bias to the review of New York's health assessment. The fund is helping develop state and national standards to ensure that natural gas is produced in a way that safeguards public health and the environment.

Goldman also was assistant administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, under President Bill Clinton. During her time there, the EPA strengthened a right-to-know provision under the Toxics Release Inventory and overhauled the nation's pesticides laws.

"What I think this exercise is about is can New York do this in a way that is safe - understanding that safety has to be in the context of ☐ in comparison to what?" Goldman said. "We're continuing to demand a lot of energy in our economy. There's no such thing as an absolutely safe way of generating energy at this point."

Jackson and Adgate declined to be interviewed for this story, referring inquiries to New York's Health Department. The department declined to discuss the review.

Jackson is best known as an expert on the links between community design and public health. He produced a four-part documentary series called "Designing Healthy Communities" that aired on PBS last year. It explored the connection between reliance on car transportation to the rise in obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Energy In Depth takes exception to a statement from Jackson on his university department's website, where he mentions fracking in a welcome message to students.

"These most unregulated drilling processes numbering in the hundreds of thousands have impacts on air quality including global warming, drinking water and other waters, soils, air quality, and nearby populations including by noise," Jackson said on the site. "Fracking involves serious worker exposures and will likely cause silicosis and other lethal diseases."

Adgate was a senior investigator for the nation's first comprehensive health impact assessment for hydraulic fracturing, for the Colorado town of Battlement Mesa. The study identified health threats and offered ways of minimizing them. County officials ended the assessment before it was completed, saying it had become bogged down in an endless stream of commentary and objections.

The Cuomo administration has refused media and public requests to make the DEC health review public, prompting criticism from environmental groups.

"This is no time for secrecy," Dr. Philip Landrigan, director of the Children's Environmental Health Center at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, said in a statement. "Members of New York's medical community must have access to the documents that are now under review by the team of outside reviewers."

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Fracking review nears completion Berkshire Eagle - Online

12/02/2012

Sunday December 2, 2012

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State and national standards

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Unfinished Business: The Unspoken Link Between Dispersants and Sick Children in the Gulf of Mexico Huffington Post, The

12/02/2012

All six of Julie Creppel's young children are sick. Vomiting. Blisters all over their bodies, even in their throats. Boils. Severe headaches that wake them up screaming at night. Nausea. Fevers. Diarrhea. Stomach spasms that contort their bodies in pain. Skin lesions. Psoriasis. Nose bleeds that gush unexpectedly. Respiratory infections. Dizziness. Sinus infections. Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease. Hair loss. And more.

The Creppels live in Boothville, La., in south Plaquemines Parish. Area health clinics and hospitals are experiencing an influx of sick children for treatment for a range of symptoms that began after the BP oil disaster. The increase in numbers of sick children coincides with the massive spraying of toxic chemical dispersants into the water and air that began in 2010. More troubling is the fact that the children are still having these symptoms to this day.

The Corexit dispersants used in the Gulf are known human health hazards, causing eye and skin irritation, respiratory problems, harm to liver, kidney, and blood cells, injury and even death to unborn babies, immune suppression, skin disorders, and more.

Not surprisingly, the symptoms Julie's children suffer are epidemic across the Gulf states that were impacted by the BP disaster -- and the secondary disaster, the widespread use of Nalco's Corexit dispersants. Most medical doctors in the Gulf have continuously treated the sick with standard drugs used for infections and viruses. Nasonex. Citirizine. DryMax. Azithromycin. Zofran. Cefdinir. Xopenex. Amoxicillin. Flovent. Suprax. Viravan-P. Albuterol. Cefixime. Ichitha ointment. Budesonide. And more.

Some of these are potent drugs that children should not be taking for long periods of time because of side effects, including, ironically, many of the very symptoms being treated. They are taking the drugs for months and now even years because the children (and adults) are not getting better. So the medical doctors prescribe more drugs, but the persistence of the symptoms belies the diagnoses.

This child suffers from frequent spontaneous nose bleeds, a symptom consistent with chemical exposure. (photo courtesy Kindra Arnesen.) The same child also experiences unexplained hair loss. (photo courtesy Kindra Arnesen.)

It should be clear to the medical community by now that they are misdiagnosing the illness and mistreating the patient. I believe the children are suffering from chemical illness, not from biological agents. This should have been clear back in 2010 after the first six to eight rounds of antibiotics and medication prescribed for babies, elders, coastal residents, visitors, and spill responders didn't clear the symptoms. It should have been clear two years after the disaster in March 2012 when BP completely reversed its position of denial of any harm to human health from oil-dispersant exposure and listed pages of same symptoms and illnesses that people had been reporting for two years as now covered by the BP medical benefits settlement (Exhibit 8) -- so-called, I can only suppose, because it mostly benefits BP, but that's another story.

The problem is the illnesses ---like BP's oil--- just don't "go away" because it's an inconvenience for oil companies and the federal government in charge of an impossible situation: There is no way to clean up oil spills, including tar sands spills. But there are many ways to lessen the impacts to workers and the public, none of which have been done to date in the Gulf.

Plenty has been done to lessen the liability and financial impacts to BP and the other companies involved in this tragedy.

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The most recent injustice was when U.S. District Judge Barbier dismissed Nalco from lawsuits over health problems stemming from use of its products. Barbier shielded Nalco from liability because, he reasoned, the dispersants had been approved by the federal government, and in most cases pre-approved by the Gulf states for use during spill response. The judge also was noted that a lawsuit might have a "chilling" effect on future use of these same dispersants in oil spill response -- exactly the opposite effect desired by the federal government and the oil industry.

The two main dispersants stockpiled in the United States for use on future spills are Corexit 9500 and Corexit 9527A -- the same dispersants that were known to be harmful to ecosystems and humans before the BP disaster, and that proved to be so after the disaster. These two dispersants are stockpiled in coastal communities around the contiguous United States and in Alaska and Hawaii. Most are owned either by the U.S. Coast Guard regional strike teams or the major national Oil Spill Response Organizations.

The federal government shields itself from any liability for use of these and other dangerous oil spill response products. Even worse, the federal government now considers human health an acceptable "risk tradeoff" for dispersant use. The March 2012 Dispersant Use Initiative, a document intended to guide and plan research needs and decision-making in future spills, states that key needs include, among others, "understanding risk to workers and public safety, and communicating the risk successfully, and understanding the trade offs of using dispersants with respect to human health" (emphasis added).

In other words, what happened in the Gulf of Mexico could happen to anyone who lives or works near, or recreates, or visits America's coasts. Many of the same chemicals in dispersants are also ingredients in diluents for tar sands and drilling fluids for hydraulic fracturing and manufactured by -- guess who -- Nalco. We need to stick together on this one, or all get sick together. Making it right in the Gulf is up to all of us before the next marine oil disaster.

Here are some suggestions for how YOU can help make it right in the Gulf.

1. Write a short letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in support of the People's Petition to amend the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan to ban toxic chemicals, including Corexit dispersants, from use in U.S. territorial waters. The letter should refer the People's Petition, document number AX120019088, and state who you are, why you care, and what you want the EPA to do. Personal letters carry more weight than form letters. Mail to: Lisa Jackson, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460.
2. Find out what dispersants or products are stockpiled in your backyard for oil spill response. Start by contacting your State Emergency Response Commission (google State name + SERC). The SERC page will list all the Local Emergency Planning Committees. Contact an LEPC near you and ask for a complete list of oil spill response products, which they will have as required under the Community Right-to-Know Act. For coastal communities, I would be surprised if that list did not include the ubiquitous Corexit dispersants. Raise local support to have your municipality pass a rights-based resolution to ban toxic dispersants and chemicals during oil spill response within the city's jurisdiction. A resolution template is available at www.ultimaticivics.org.
3. Ask your congressional delegates to hold hearings to investigate the link between Corexit dispersants and public health, especially children's health, in the Gulf of Mexico. Ask your delegates to support banning Corexit dispersants used during the BP Gulf disaster, as human health "tradeoffs" cannot be justified.

I would like to personally appeal to Warren Buffet to fund community health clinics in the Gulf of Mexico. His stock trading company Berkshire Hathaway bought shares of Nalco in 2009 before the BP disaster as an investment on water filtration, which at the time was most of Nalco's business. Berkshire divested its Nalco holdings in late 2010 -- after Nalco made millions in dispersant sales. The idea for community health clinics originated within the impacted communities as a way of getting treatment for immediate needs, but it was cherry-picked by BP as the centerpiece of BP's medical benefits

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settlement. One clinic in particular in Jean Lafitte, La., was ready to open its door to clients in fall 2011 but the doors remain closed because the settlement is stalled in court. Opening that clinic, now and independent of BP controls embedded in the settlement, could be done with private donations to the Jean Lafitte Health Clinic.

Early into the BP disaster, I warned people about the short- and long-term consequences of exposure to oil and dispersants. Now those consequences are hitting home -- especially vulnerable are the children. Don't believe those BP ads. We need to all help make this right for real.

Riki Ott will be touring the Gulf of Mexico in February, helping communities organize at the grassroots level to ban toxic chemical dispersants. Persons interested in hosting a training should contact via her web site, www.RikiOtt.com.

Not One Drop: Betrayal and Courage in the Wake of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

Sound Truth & Corporate Myth\$: The Legacy of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

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Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete Dayton Daily News - Online

12/02/2012

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At least one of the health experts said that while she's aware some things have gone wrong in communities with shale gas drilling, the health and environmental damage from using gas for heat and fuel may not be as bad as burning coal.

"We know that emissions from burning coal cause tremendous damage to health," Lynn Goldman of George Washington University said in an interview with The Associated Press. "A decision not to frack is a decision to use more coal."

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State Health Commissioner Nirav Shah chose Goldman, Richard Jackson and John Adgate to conduct the review. Goldman is dean of George Washington University's School of Public Health and Health Services. Jackson is chairman of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California Los Angeles School of Public Health. Adgate chairs the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at the University of Colorado School of Public Health.

All three experts raised red flags for the industry group Energy In Depth. The group sent a letter to Shah saying previous work and statements by them showed anti-fracking bias.

"While voicing concerns is an understandable and at times necessary function of scientific progress, these experts have chosen to make statements that contradict well established scientific conclusions about both hydraulic fracturing and shale development," Energy In Depth Executive Director Lee Fuller wrote.

In fracking, millions of gallons of chemically treated water is injected into wells to break up the underground shale and release the gas. Regulators and the industry say the method is safe when done according to rules set by the states. But environmental groups and some scientists say not enough research has been done on air and water contamination or other health and environmental issues.

Goldman, who also is an Environmental Defense Fund trustee, said she brings no bias to the review of New York's health assessment. The fund is helping develop state and national standards to ensure that natural gas is produced in a way that safeguards public health and the environment.

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Jackson and Adgate declined to be interviewed for this story, referring inquiries to New York's Health Department. The department declined to discuss the review.

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"This is no time for secrecy," Dr. Philip Landrigan, director of the Children's Environmental Health Center at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, said in a statement. "Members of New York's medical community must have access to the documents that are now under review by the team of outside reviewers."

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Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete New Canaan News - Online

12/01/2012

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Experts' review of NY fracking expected Monday
Observer-Dispatch - Online, The

12/01/2012

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By MARY ESCH

The Associated Press

Posted Dec 01, 2012 @ 03:42 PM

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**Fracking secrets by thousands keep Americans clueless on wells
Grand Forks Herald - Online**

12/01/2012

Published December 01, 2012, 06:36 PM

Fracking secrets by thousands keep Americans clueless on wells

Texas, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico and North Dakota all require disclosure of chemicals used in fracking, but they leave it up to energy companies to determine what chemicals can be labeled trade secrets.

By:

Ben Elgin, Benjamin Haas and Phil Kuntz, Bloomberg News

Talk about it

A subsidiary of Nabors Industries Ltd. pumped a mixture of chemicals identified only as "EXP- F0173-11" into a half-dozen oil wells in rural Karnes County, Texas, in July.

Few people outside Nabors, the largest onshore drilling contractor by revenue, know exactly what's in that blend. This much is clear: One ingredient, an unidentified solvent, can cause damage to the kidney and liver, according to safety information about the product that Michigan state regulators have on file.

A year-old Texas law that requires drillers to disclose chemicals they pump underground during hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," was powerless to compel transparency for EXP- F0173-11. The solvent and several other ingredients in the product are considered a trade secret by Superior Well Services, the Nabors subsidiary. That means they're exempt from disclosure.

Drilling companies in Texas, the biggest oil-and-natural gas producing state, claimed similar exemptions about 19,000 times this year through August, according to their chemical- disclosure reports. Data from the documents were compiled by Pivot Upstream Group, a Houston-based firm that studies the energy industry, and analyzed by Bloomberg News. Nationwide, companies withheld one out of every five chemicals they used in fracking, a separate examination of a broader database shows.

Trade-secret exemptions block information on more than five ingredients for every well in Texas, undermining the statute's purpose of informing people about chemicals that are hauled through their communities and injected thousands of feet beneath their homes and farms, said Lon Burnam, a Democratic state representative and a co-author of the law.

"This disclosure bill has a hole big enough to drive a Mack truck through," Burnam says of the law, which he called "much compromised legislation."

"Is it meaningless because there are so many exemptions?" he asked. "I'm afraid it may be."

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The Texas disclosure bill marks a growing effort by the oil and gas industry to address public concerns about fracking, a drilling technique in which millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals are pumped underground to free up more hydrocarbons. While the method has unlocked vast new sources of energy, safety questions center on the hundreds of chemicals used — many of them known carcinogens. The federal Environmental Protection Agency has little authority to regulate fracking; Congress decided in 2005 that the bureau wouldn't oversee the practice.

The 2010 documentary film "Gasland" showed homeowners near fracked wells igniting the water that flowed from their faucets. A year later, the EPA linked fracking to contaminated drinking water in Pavillion, Wyo. The agency is retesting the Wyoming wells. A separate report from the U.S. Geological Survey this year confirmed the environmental agency's initial finding; it detected levels of methane, ethane, diesel compounds and phenol, which the EPA had identified in 2011.

Companies including Houston-based Halliburton Co. have embraced the Texas law as a model that "provides an enormous amount of information to the general public" while protecting trade secrets from competitors, said Susie McMichael, a company spokeswoman.

"Without such protection, companies would have no incentive to develop and put into use new technologies that are both environmentally beneficial and more effective," McMichael said in an email.

In August, the largest well-servicing companies that worked in Texas withheld the most information about frack jobs. Wells serviced by Halliburton and Houston-based Baker Hughes Inc., the second- and third-largest oilfield services companies respectively, contained more than nine secrets per well according to reports filed by the companies. Frack jobs by Superior Well Services, the Nabors subsidiary, omitted the most information with more than 32 secrets per well.

For neighbors of fracked wells, the omissions mean they can't use the disclosures to watch for frack fluids migrating into creeks, rivers and aquifers, because they don't know what to look for, says Adam Briggie, who is chairman of a citizen's group in Denton, Texas, called the Denton Stakeholder Drilling Advisory Group.

"We can't test to see what is coming into the environment," says Briggie, 35, who also works as an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas in Denton. "If frack fluids are so harmless, why do they hold onto these trade secrets so strongly?"

Dennis Smith, a Nabors spokesman, didn't reply to several emails and phone messages requesting comment. Baker Hughes provides information on its fracking fluids "in a format that minimizes intellectual-property-rights risks to our products," according to a statement emailed by company spokeswoman Pamela Easton.

Halliburton's McMichael noted that the Texas rules were written with input from environmental groups, including Environmental Defense Fund, a New York-based environmental group whose president, Fred Krupp, has called the supply of natural gas that may be liberated by fracking "a potential game changer."

The Texas rules could "help industry do something that industry has trouble doing for itself — gain the public's trust," wrote Scott Anderson, a senior policy adviser to EDF, in an October 2011 letter to the Texas Railroad Commission, which regulates oil and gas drilling in the state.

Yet the regulations "could wind up hurting public confidence rather than helping," particularly if companies report fewer chemicals than the public expects, Anderson wrote. In an interview this week, Anderson said that while EDF considers the Texas rule "landmark legislation" that won industry support for disclosing chemicals, the group doesn't support the final version because it was watered down.

Industry lobbyists made it clear that they wanted strong trade-secret protections, "but they didn't say it would be this heavily utilized," said Cyrus Reed, acting director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter, who worked with companies to

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develop the rule. "It is disappointing to see this many trade secrets being claimed."

The law, signed by Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, in June 2011, requires companies to disclose their fracking chemicals on FracFocus, a national website that the energy industry helped create in 2011 to allow for voluntary disclosure. Bloomberg News reported in August that more than 40 percent of wells fracked in eight major drilling states last year had been omitted from the voluntary site.

Oil and gas companies are permitted to withhold disclosure of chemicals and their concentrations in any product that they claim to be a trade secret under the Texas law. Such claims can be challenged by state regulators and landowners of well sites or adjacent parcels.

Several other states that require disclosure of fracking chemicals, including Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico and North Dakota, also leave it up to energy companies to determine what chemicals can be labeled secrets. North Dakota's rule requires companies to report fracking chemicals to FracFocus, beginning last April.

"We require whatever FracFocus requires," said Alison Ritter, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Mineral Resources' Oil and Gas Division.

The FracFocus website states that chemicals should be disclosed unless they're a trade secret, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The operators of FracFocus, which is supported by funds from the industry, don't check trade-secret claims or offer a way to challenge an exemption.

Mike Paque, the executive director of the Groundwater Protection Council, a group of state water officials that's one of the operators of FracFocus, didn't respond to requests for an interview.

"We have successfully fulfilled our commitment . . . to ensure that Texans know every single ingredient used in the hydraulic fracturing process," said Elizabeth Ames Jones, then-chairwoman of the Texas Railroad Commission, when the law was signed last year. "Texans can be assured they will know more about what is going into the ground for fracturing than what goes into a can of soda," she said.

Jones said this month that she's proud of what Texas did. "There are people who want to use scare tactics to drive an agenda that is not good for America," she said in an email.

The 19,000 trade-secret claims made in Texas this year through August hid information that included descriptions of ingredients as well as identification numbers and concentrations of the chemicals used. Overall, oil and gas companies withheld information on about one out of every seven ingredients they pumped into 3,639 wells.

In 5,000 other instances, Texas well operators failed to disclose information without saying why, filling in boxes on forms with "N/A" or "mixture," for example, or leaving them blank. Such omissions raised the total to almost seven secrets per well from about five.

Nationally, companies claimed trade secrets or otherwise failed to identify the chemicals they used about 22 percent of the time, according to a Bloomberg News analysis of FracFocus data for 18 states. The data were compiled and released this month by SkyTruth.org, a website that uses data and digital mapping to investigate environmental issues.

Among states with at least 250 fracked wells, Oklahoma had the most unknown components; almost a third were listed as trade secrets or had no valid identification numbers attached to them.

A smaller sample from Texas, the 370 wells that were reported in August 2012, showed that the number of secrets per well increased to almost eight when small frack jobs — those using less than 100,000 gallons of water — were excluded.

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Although oil and gas companies submit the disclosures, the well-servicing companies they hire decide which chemicals will be disclosed or kept secret, said Halliburton's McMichael and others. The number of ingredients they withhold from disclosure can vary widely, based on the August data.

Wells serviced by Geneva-based Weatherford International Ltd. averaged 0.1 secrets per well, while Baker Hughes averaged 9.1; Halliburton, 9.3; and Superior Well Services, 32.5.

Melanie Kania, a spokeswoman for Weatherford, declined to comment.

Most of the secret chemicals are described only in general terms, such as "polymer" or "surfactant," leaving little clue about their contents, said Theo Colborn, president of The Endocrine Disruption Exchange. The Paonia, Colo.-based nonprofit, which is staffed by scientists, studies chemicals that interfere with human development and has criticized regulatory approaches to fracking.

Texas wasn't the first state to require disclosure of frack ingredients. In September 2010, Wyoming enacted a similar law, which requires an extra step to claim a trade secret. Companies need to apply with state regulators to explain why they need trade-secret protection for specific ingredients.

Since that rule went into effect, the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission has approved 78 additives as trade secrets and rejected six such requests, according to Lori McCoy, a support specialist for the state agency.

Recently, more states are following the Texas model — with an assist from industry. In December 2011, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a Washington-based public policy organization that brings together corporations and legislators to craft bills for states, adopted model legislation that is almost identical to the Texas rule.

The model bill was sponsored inside ALEC by Exxon Mobil Corp., which also advises the council from a seat on its "private enterprise board," according to ALEC documents obtained by Common Cause, a nonprofit group in Washington.

So far, legislators in eight states have proposed bills based at least in part on the ALEC model, according to Todd Wynn, the director of the organization's task force on energy, environment and agriculture.

The main author of the Texas bill said other states will tailor the language to their needs.

"Can it be better and should it be better?" asked State Rep. Jim Keffer, a Republican. "Yes, and I think it will be better. People are going to use this bill as a base and then make it fit their state's attitude or their industry."

His Democratic co-author disagreed. It would be "a horrible mistake" for other states to use the Texas bill as a blueprint, Burnam said.

"Texas state government has been a wholly owned subsidiary of national oil and gas interests for a century," he says. "Do not look at it for guidance on anything related to protecting public health and safety."

— With assistance from Jim Polson.

More from around the web

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12/01/2012

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4 hours ago • Associated Press

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Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete WBNS-TV - Online

12/01/2012

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Saturday December 1, 2012 2:15 PM

By MARY ESCH

The Associated Press

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Producers of natural gas turn to 'green completion' Athens Banner-Herald - Online

12/01/2012

Business

Producers of natural gas turn to 'green completion'

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Andrew Maykuth

December 1, 2012 2:59 PM EST

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SYCAMORE, Pa. — The towering flares that turn night into day in the Marcellus Shale gaslands are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

Natural gas producers are turning to new techniques to capture the gas emitted during the well-completion process. In the past, a well's initial production was typically vented or burned off to allow impurities to clear before the well was tied into a pipeline.

Now, more operators are employing reduced-emission completions — a “green completion” — a process in which impurities such as sand, drilling debris, and fluids from hydraulic fracturing are filtered out and the gas is sold, not wasted.

The five gas wells that EQT Corp. completed in October at this remote site in Washington Township, Pa., are typical. Compared to a gas flare, which roars like a jet engine and licks the sky with flame like a giant welder's torch, green completion is dull and quiet.

EQT is not the only drilling company that has embraced green completions. The equipment for separating the gas from the “flowback” has been perfected in the past decade, and in the next three years, using it will become standard practice across the nation.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved new rules this year requiring green completions nationwide by 2015, except for exploratory wells unconnected to pipelines. As of Oct. 15, drillers can no longer vent the gas into the atmosphere without burning.

The EPA says green completions will save drillers up to \$19 million a year by capturing natural gas that would be wasted.

The advent of green completions is an example of the rapid development of shale-gas technology, which has revived a flagging domestic energy sector in just a few years.

“What was true yesterday is no longer true today,” said Andrew Place, director of public policy research at EQT, based in Pittsburgh. “Systems are evolving.”

Much of the new technology has been driven to address fears about drilling, including hydraulic fracturing, the extraction

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technique that has turned impermeable shale into a bonanza of oil and gas.

"Public concerns have pushed the engineers to come up with solutions," Place said.

Activists and regulators are paying more attention to air emissions from shale-gas development, including toxins emitted during drilling and production. Much of the focus has been on releases of methane, the main component of natural gas as well as a potent greenhouse gas, though there is substantial disagreement over studies attempting to measure the methane leaks.

In devising the new rules, the EPA said it was acting under its Clean Air Act mandate to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds and pollutants such as benzene, which can cause cancer. The agency said the new rules were expected to eliminate 95 percent of the smog-forming volatile organic compounds emitted from more than 13,000 new gas wells each year.

The EPA said a "co-benefit" of green completions was a reduction in methane emissions by 1 million to 1.7 million tons a year.

The government delayed full implementation of the rule until 2015 to allow the industry to build enough equipment to handle the workload.

"We'd say the rules have not gone far enough," said Jay Duffy, a staff attorney with Philadelphia's Clean Air Council, which joined with Earthjustice in October to notify the EPA it planned to sue.

Duffy praised the EPA for taking action to curb toxic emissions from drilling, but he contends the federal agency failed to directly confront the climate-change issue. The EPA concluded in 2009 that greenhouse gases endangered public health and welfare, but it has not devised standards on methane emissions.

Anti-drilling activists argue that so much methane escapes from gas development it undermines the industry's claims about the clean-air benefits of the shale-gas boom.

Some industry leaders say the biggest benefit to green-completion technology is that they hope it puts the emissions controversy to rest. "I do think it addresses a criticism that the industry has had in terms of methane emissions, and maybe we can take that off the table," Jack P. Williams Jr., president of XTO Energy, said in a recent interview.

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Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete KFOX-TV - Online

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Gas drilling presents Obama with historic choices Four Corners Business Journal - Online

12/01/2012

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A drilling rig is pictured near Calumet, Okla. in July.

President faces decisions on fracking, LNG

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) Energy companies, environmental groups, and even Hollywood stars are watching to see what decisions President Barack Obama makes about regulating or promoting natural gas drilling.

The stakes are huge. Business leaders don't want government regulations to slow the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars of clean, cheap domestic energy over the next few decades. Environmental groups see that same tide as a potential threat, not just to air and water, but to renewable energy. And on a strategic level, diplomats envision a future when natural gas helps make the U.S. less beholden to imports.

Some say the unexpected drilling boom presents historic options and risks for the Obama administration.

"It's a tough choice. The president is in a real bind," said Charles Ebinger, director of the energy security initiative at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., nonprofit. "I think the question is what does he want his

Advertisement

legacy to be?"

Ebinger said that if Obama fully embraced the boom in gas drilling the nation could see "incredible" job gains that could lead to "a re-industrialization of America." Possibilities like that are tempting to any president, and perhaps even more so in the current economy.

"But really embracing this stuff is going to bring him squarely in conflict with some of his environmental supporters. It's not without some possible peril, particularly if he gets to be seen too cozy with the oil and gas folks," Ebinger said.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, has made it possible to tap into deep reserves of oil and gas but has also raised concerns about pollution. Large volumes of water, along with sand and hazardous chemicals, are injected underground to break rock apart and free the oil and gas.

Environmental groups and some scientists say there hasn't been enough research on water and air pollution issues. The industry and many federal and state officials say the practice is safe when done properly, and that many rules on air pollution and disclosure of the chemicals used in fracking are being strengthened.

The Sierra Club is already trying to slow the gas rush, which began in Texas and has expanded to Pennsylvania, Colorado and other states. It's started a nationwide "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign to push for more regulation on an industry it describes as "Dirty, Dangerous and Run Amok."

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"We need to avoid replacing one set of problems with a new but very different set of problems," said Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's executive director, referring to coal and natural gas. Investing in green energy makes more economic and environmental sense, he said.

The Sierra Club knows natural gas will be a part of the nation's energy future. "How much a part is a big fight right now," Brune said.

Such arguments have resonated with many environmental groups, and with actors and musicians who are lending their star power to anti-drilling efforts.

The Hollywood film *Promised Land* is scheduled for release in December, starring Matt Damon, with a story line about drilling from best-selling novelist Dave Eggers. But even before its release, critics pounced on the fact that some financing for the project came from a company in the United Arab Emirates a country that stands to lose money if the U.S. gets more of its energy needs at home.

Brune agreed that "you have to acknowledge that there are benefits to home-grown energy."

Critics say many states haven't been tough enough on the industry, which has objected to the idea of national drilling regulations. Some state officials oppose such proposals, too.

"Yes, we are concerned," said Patrick Henderson, energy executive for Pa. Gov. Tom Corbett. "Upwards of 10 federal agencies are seeking to put their proverbial nose under the tent with regard to oil and gas development." He added that federal intrusion "is a surefire way to impede job growth. We'll be vigilant of proposed federal rulemakings."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is conducting one major national review of drilling and potential drinking water impacts, but it won't be finished until 2014.

Jack Gerard, president of the American Petroleum Institute, which lobbies for the industry in Washington, is hoping Obama's campaign rhetoric doesn't change.

"He has evolved on the oil and the gas issue, and today, he gives it a full-throated endorsement in terms of the need to produce it to create jobs, get our economy back on track," Gerard said in a postelection conference call.

Most experts agree that Obama faces four big choices about the gas boom: whether to back nationwide EPA rules; whether to keep pressuring coal-fired power plants to reduce emissions (which benefits gas as an alternative fuel); whether to allow large-scale exports of liquefied natural gas; and whether to support a national push to use compressed gas in commercial vehicles.

One expert in Texas predicted that Obama won't go to extremes.

"I don't think the administration will do anything to halt development," said Kenneth Medlock III, a professor at Rice University's Center for Energy Studies in Houston, adding that there will be "some attempts" to move regulations into federal hands.

Medlock expects Obama to keep the pressure on the coal industry, but go slowly on the natural gas export issue. The industry says exports have the potential to be highly profitable, but some members of Congress fear exports will just drive up domestic prices, depriving consumers and other industries of the benefits of cheap natural gas.

Others see an opportunity for the president to stake out a middle ground.

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"A lot of the industry guys are pretty shaken by the anti-fracking movement," said Michael Shellenberger, president of the Breakthrough Institute, an Oakland nonprofit that promotes new ways to address environmental issues. "That might make them a bit more open to regulatory oversight."

Shellenberger said natural gas could also be a "big opportunity" for Obama as part of a broader campaign to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Ebinger agreed, saying that "if we really pushed tax credits to get diesel out of long-distance trucks" that could lead to massive carbon dioxide reductions. But at some point, Obama will have to make tough decisions. "I don't think the president can punt this one," he said.

Whatever Obama does, "it will definitely drive a bunch of people crazy" in the environmental community, Shellenberger said.

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Middletown Journal - Online**

12/01/2012

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

NY fracking report expected to be completed by Monday Newsday - Online

12/01/2012

Photo credit: Getty Images | Men with Cabot Oil and Gas work on a natural gas valve at a hydraulic fracturing site in South Montrose, Pa. Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, stimulates gas production by injecting wells with high volumes of chemical-laced water in order to free-up pockets of natural gas below. (Jan. 18, 2012)

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**NY fracking report expected to finish soon
Newsday AP**

12/01/2012

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Published: December 1, 2012 2:32 PM

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Photo credit: Getty Images | Men with Cabot Oil and Gas work on a natural gas valve at a hydraulic fracturing site in South Montrose, Pa. Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, stimulates gas production by injecting wells with high volumes of chemical-laced water in order to free-up pockets of natural gas below. (Jan. 18, 2012)

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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Courier-Post - Online**

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Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete Newsday - Online

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By The Associated Press MARY ESCH (Associated Press)

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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Jackson and Adgate declined to be interviewed for this story, referring inquiries to New York's Health Department. The department declined to discuss the review.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

**Natural gas producers are turning to new techniques to capture the gas emitted during the well-completion process.
The Gulf Today**

12/01/2012

SYCAMORE: The towering flares that turn night into day in the Marcellus Shale gaslands are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

In the past, a well's initial production was typically vented or burned off to allow impurities to clear before the well was tied into a pipeline. Now, more operators are employing reduced-emission completions a "green completion" a process in which impurities such as sand, drilling debris, and fluids from hydraulic fracturing are filtered out and the gas is sold, not wasted. The five gas wells that EQT Corporation completed in October at this remote site in Washington Township, are typical.

Compared to a gas flare, which roars like a jet engine and licks the sky with flame like a giant welder's torch, green completion is dull and quiet. EQT is not the only drilling company that has embraced green completions.

The equipment for separating the gas from the "flowback" has been perfected in the past decade, and in the next three years, using it will become standard practice across the nation.

The US Environmental Protection Agency approved new rules this year requiring green completions nationwide by 2015, except for exploratory wells unconnected to pipelines. As of Oct.15, drillers can no longer vent the gas into the atmosphere without burning.

The EPA says green completions will save drillers up to \$19 million a year by capturing natural gas that would be wasted. The advent of green completions is an example of the rapid development of shale-gas technology, which has revived a flagging domestic energy sector in just a few years.

"What was true yesterday is no longer true today," said Andrew Place, director of public policy research at EQT, based in Pittsburgh. "Systems are evolving."

Much of the new technology has been driven to address fears about drilling, including hydraulic fracturing, the extraction technique that has turned impermeable shale into a bonanza of oil and gas. "Public concerns have pushed the engineers to come up with solutions," Place said.

Activists and regulators are paying more attention to air emissions from shale-gas development, including toxins emitted during drilling and production. Much of the focus has been on releases of methane, the main component of natural gas as well as a potent greenhouse gas, though there is substantial disagreement over studies attempting to measure the methane leaks.

In devising the new rules, the EPA said it was acting under its Clean Air Act mandate to reduce emissions of volatile organic compounds and pollutants such as benzene, which can cause cancer.

The agency said the new rules were expected to eliminate 95 per cent of the smog-forming volatile organic compounds emitted from more than 13,000 new gas wells each year.

The EPA said a "co-benefit" of green completions was a reduction in methane emissions by 1 million to 1.7 million tons a year. The government delayed full implementation of the rule until 2015 to allow the industry to build enough equipment

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

to handle the workload.

The American Petroleum Institute and other industry groups are challenging the new rules in the US Court of Appeals in Washington. So are environmental groups. "We'd say the rules have not gone far enough," said Jay Duffy, a staff attorney with Philadelphia's Clean Air Council, which joined with Earthjustice in October to notify the EPA it planned to sue.

Duffy praised the EPA for taking action to curb toxic emissions from drilling, but he contends the federal agency failed to directly confront the climate-change issue.

The EPA concluded in 2009 that greenhouse gases endangered public health and welfare, but it has not devised standards on methane emissions. Anti-drilling activists argue that so much methane escapes from gas development it undermines the industry's claims about the clean-air benefits of the shale-gas boom.

The industry says environmentalists and the EPA are using inflated, biased estimates of methane emissions.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Greening up gas fields Register-Guard - Online

12/01/2012

Public concerns about the environment push industry engineers to find solutions

Michael Wirtz/The Philadelphia Inquirer

Andrew Place, corporate director of energy and environmental policy for EQT, visits one of the company's gas drilling rigs near Waynesburg, Pa. "Systems are evolving," Place says.

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Some industry leaders hope green-completion technology will put the emissions controversy to rest.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Farm bill key front in staying EPA's hand FarmWeek - Online

12/01/2012

Farm bill key front in staying EPA's hand

GROWMARK Governmental Affairs Director Chuck Spencer notes a lengthy list of potential federal regulations that have come back on the table with President Obama's re-election.

Martin Ross

Published: Dec 1, 2012

Those include U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) greenhouse gas emission standards, ozone rules, stormwater regulations, and the scope of jurisdiction over "the waters of the U.S."

EPA also could look at restricting hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" technologies that could be used to tap new underground natural gas reserves, Spencer said.

"There are new regulations that have been under consideration, and I think the outcome of the election certainly brings them back into play, potentially on the same path they were on prior to the election," he told FarmWeek.

"We need to take a very strong perspective on what we can do to make sure we inject science, our opinions, and our positions into this process we have in front of us."

For example, the farm bill debate offers a key opportunity to limit EPA's scope over pesticide use. Current Senate/House Ag Committee farm bill provisions would prohibit EPA from requiring further federal Clean Water Act (CWA) discharge permits for pesticide applications.

The measure, based on a 2011 House bill that stalled in the Senate, argues the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) already covers ag pesticide labeling and use and that CWA requirements thus are repetitive.

Most states interpreted EPA's initial pesticide permit requirements to cover aquatic and some forestry applications. However, Spencer said he sees "nothing to prevent" EPA from expanding requirements to terrestrial farm field applications, though FIFRA "has been the law for decades."

An EPA endangered species push is further complicating pesticide use in key West Coast watersheds, while the mid-Atlantic states continue to contend with burgeoning nutrient management regulations for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. "It's my strong feeling that a Mississippi River Basin initiative is the next EPA focal point past the Chesapeake Bay," Spencer said.

"If that's the case, shouldn't we be watching and considering activities the East Coasters are doing in response to their challenge that we may be able to implement in a complementary fashion with the KIC (Keep it for the Crop) nutrient program and other watershed-based programs we have in the Midwest? By gleaning the best applications and opportunities, we could make any type of regulatory push less painful and more decision-based, rather than having it just applied to us."

Permalink: [Click here](#)

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Update on fracking action at statehouse Vindicator - Online

12/01/2012

Published: Sat, December 1, 2012 @ 12:00 a.m.

By Marc Kovac

COLUMBUS

An update on lawmaker action and other activities at the Ohio Statehouse related to horizontal hydraulic fracturing:

Economic Impact: On Oct. 23, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy touted what it called a first-of-its-kind study of the economic impact of shale energy development, with big benefits estimated from fracking-related activities.

The study projected that 1.75 million jobs already have been created in the industry, with millions more projected over the next two decades.

Additionally, "In 2012, shale energy is responsible for \$62 billion in tax revenue," according to the study.

Between now and 2035, shale energy development is expected to contribute more than \$2.5 trillion in total tax revenue — more than half of which will go to states and localities.

Overall, between now and 2035, the energy industry will invest more than \$5.1 trillion in energy development."

The study is available online at www.energyxxi.org/americas-energy-future.

Still Pushing: Gov. John Kasich continues to push for an increase in taxes from oil and gas production from horizontal hydraulic fracturing, voicing optimism Oct. 24 that lawmakers would consider his severance-tax proposal during the lame-duck session.

Petitions: The national Environmental Integrity Project announced Oct. 24 that it was joining more than a dozen like-minded groups to petition the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to require more disclosure of chemicals used in horizontal hydraulic fracturing. They want oil and gas producers to report to the Toxics Release Inventory, providing greater public access to the information.

"The EPA estimates the oil and gas industry releases 127,000 tons of hazardous air pollutants every year, second only to power plants and more than any of the other industries already reporting to TRI," Eric Schaeffer, director of the Environmental Integrity Project, said in a released statement. "Why shouldn't oil and gas companies be required to report these toxic releases under our right-to-know laws, like so many other industries already do?"

Next Year? Republican Senate President Tom Niehaus told Statehouse reporters Oct. 30 that legislative action on the governor's frack-tax proposal likely would not happen until the new session.

"We're just going to start the process of having some conversations to see what, if anything, can be enacted in lame duck, or whether it's something that we would carry over into next year," he said.

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“There is some talk of a more comprehensive tax-reform package for next year. ... There’s no immediate revenue issue that would dictate that we enact that tax today versus, say, three months from now, so it’s not a pressing timeliness issue from that standpoint.”

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Lawmakers fear Kathleen Sebelius taking aim at natural gas boom Washington Examiner - Online

12/01/2012

November 30, 2012 | 5:49 pm | Modified: November 30, 2012 at 5:50 pm

Commentary Writer The Washington Examiner

House Energy and Commerce Committee lawmakers worry that Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and the Center for Disease Control will, in the name of public health, crack down on the hydraulic fracturing central to the natural gas boom.

"Despite the significant growth of natural gas development, we are greatly concerned that the scientific objectivity of the Department of Health and Human Services is being subverted and countless jobs could be in jeopardy," committee chairman Fred Upton, R-Mich., wrote to Sebelius today in a letter signed by relevant subcommittee heads.

Sebelius has an apparent opportunity to shape hydraulic fracturing regulations because an executive order from President Obama empowered the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to participate in an Interagency Working Group on the safety of natural gas production.

"As questions within CDC's area of expertise arise before the Interagency Working Group, we expect that your Department will adopt an approach based on sound scientific principles, including scientific study and analyses unencumbered by preconceived notions, prejudice, or ideology; a robust peer review process; and conclusions informed by decades of State regulator expertise," the lawmakers added.

Earlier this year, the CDC told Bloomberg News that "We do not have enough information to say with certainty whether shale gas drilling poses a threat to public health." Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, whose agency is also collaborating with the other agencies in the working group, promised that the EPA would "use its authorities to protect local residents if a driller endangers water supplies and the state and local authorities have not acted.

The executive order charges the Interagency Working Group with facilitating the development of "sensible, cost-effective public health and environmental standards to implement Federal law and augment State safeguards." Upton's earlier letter requesting clarity on the IWG's work, but received no answer from Jackson or the IWG.

The CDC has so far avoided meeting with lawmakers to talk about the public health study. "The fact that the agency has not yet provided or scheduled the briefing – two months after it was first requested – raises significant concerns that the agency does not intend to include Congress, the states, or the public in a process that is of critical importance to and could have a lasting impact on our economy and job creation," the lawmakers also wrote today.

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Myriad fracking secrets keep Americans clueless on wells Pittsburgh Post-Gazette - Online

12/01/2012

Myriad fracking secrets keep Americans clueless on wells

December 1, 2012 12:02 am

By Ben Elgin / Bloomberg News

A subsidiary of Nabors Industries Ltd. pumped a mixture of chemicals identified only as "EXP- F0173-11" into a half-dozen oil wells in rural Karnes County, Texas, in July.

Few people outside Nabors, the largest onshore drilling contractor by revenue, know exactly what's in that blend. This much is clear: One ingredient, an unidentified solvent, can cause damage to the kidney and liver, according to safety information about the product that Michigan state regulators have on file.

A year-old Texas law that requires drillers to disclose chemicals they pump underground during hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," was powerless to compel transparency for EXP- F0173-11. The solvent and several other ingredients in the product are considered a trade secret by Superior Well Services, the Nabors subsidiary. That means they're exempt from disclosure.

Drilling companies in Texas, the biggest oil-and-natural gas producing state, claimed similar exemptions about 19,000 times this year through August, according to their chemical-disclosure reports. Data from the documents were compiled by Pivot Upstream Group, a Houston-based firm that studies the energy industry, and analyzed by Bloomberg News. Nationwide, companies withheld 1 out of every 5 chemicals they used in fracking, a separate examination of a broader database shows.

Trade-secret exemptions block information on more than five ingredients for every well in Texas, undermining the statute's purpose of informing people about chemicals that are hauled through their communities and injected thousands of feet beneath their homes and farms, said Lon Burnam, a Democratic state representative and a co-author of the law.

"This disclosure bill has a hole big enough to drive a Mack truck through," Mr. Burnam said of the law, which he called "much compromised legislation."

Is it "meaningless because there are so many exemptions?" he said. "I'm afraid it may be."

The Texas disclosure bill marks a growing effort by the oil and gas industry to address public concerns about fracking, a drilling technique in which millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals are pumped underground to free up more hydrocarbons. While the method has unlocked vast new sources of energy, safety questions center on the hundreds of chemicals used -- many of them known carcinogens. The federal Environmental Protection Agency has little authority to regulate fracking; Congress decided in 2005 that the bureau wouldn't oversee the practice.

The 2010 documentary film "Gasland" showed homeowners near fracked wells igniting the water that flowed from their faucets. A year later, the EPA linked fracking to contaminated drinking water in Pavillion, Wyo. The agency is retesting the Wyoming wells. A separate report from the U.S. Geological Survey this year confirmed the environmental agency's initial finding; it detected levels of methane, ethane, diesel compounds and phenol, which the EPA had identified in 2011.

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Companies including Houston-based Halliburton Co. have embraced the Texas law as a model that "provides an enormous amount of information to the general public" while protecting trade secrets from competitors, said Susie McMichael, a company spokeswoman.

"Without such protection, companies would have no incentive to develop and put into use new technologies that are both environmentally beneficial and more effective," Ms. McMichael said in an email.

For neighbors of fracked wells, the omissions mean they can't use the disclosures to watch for frack fluids migrating into creeks, rivers and aquifers, because they don't know what to look for, says Adam Briggie, who is chairman of a citizen's group in Denton, Texas, called the Denton Stakeholder Drilling Advisory Group.

"We can't test to see what is coming into the environment," says Mr. Briggie, 35, who also works as an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas in Denton. "If frack fluids are so harmless, why do they hold onto these trade secrets so strongly?"

When Texas lawmakers were debating the disclosure bill, industry lobbyists made it clear that they wanted strong trade-secret protections, "but they didn't say it would be this heavily utilized," said Cyrus Reed, acting director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter, who worked with companies to develop the rule. "It is disappointing to see this many trade secrets being claimed."

The law was signed by Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, in June 2011.

Oil and gas companies are permitted to withhold disclosure of chemicals and their concentrations in any product that they claim to be a trade secret under the Texas law. Such claims can be challenged by state regulators and landowners of well sites or adjacent parcels.

Several other states that require disclosure of fracking chemicals -- including Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico and North Dakota -- also leave it up to energy companies to determine what chemicals can be labeled secrets.

Recently, more states are following the Texas model -- with an assist from industry. In December 2011, the American Legislative Exchange Council, a Washington-based public policy organization that brings together corporations and legislators to craft bills for states, adopted model legislation that is almost identical to the Texas rule.

The model bill was sponsored inside ALEC by Exxon Mobil Corp., which also advises the council from a seat on its "private enterprise board," according to ALEC documents obtained by Common Cause, a nonprofit in Washington.

So far, legislators in eight states have proposed bills based at least in part on the ALEC model, according to Todd Wynn, the director of the organization's task force on energy, environment and agriculture.

The main author of the Texas bill said other states will tailor the language to their needs.

"Can it be better, and should it be better?" said State Rep. Jim Keffer, a Republican. "Yes, and I think it will be better. People are going to use this bill as a base and then make it fit their state's attitude or their industry."

His Democratic co-author disagreed. It would be "a horrible mistake" for other states to use the Texas bill as a blueprint, Mr. Burnam said.

"Texas state government has been a wholly owned subsidiary of national oil and gas interests for a century," he says. "Do not look at it for guidance on anything related to protecting public health and safety."

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

First Published December 1, 2012 12:00 am

EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

Experts' review of NY fracking soon to be complete Associated Press (AP) - New York City Bureau

12/01/2012

ALBANY, N.Y._Experts reviewing the health effects of shale gas development in New York are among the nation's most prominent in environmental health, giving opponents hope but the industry concern that reviewers will warn against drilling operations that use hydraulic fracturing.

The state has had a moratorium on "fracking" for shale gas since the Department of Environmental Conservation started an environmental impact study in 2008. The department released proposed new regulations Wednesday stemming from the study and will take public comment before making them final.

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

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For neighbors of fracked wells, the omissions mean they can't use the disclosures to watch for frack fluids migrating into creeks, rivers and aquifers, because they don't know what to look for, says Adam Briggie, who is chairman of a citizen's group in Denton, Texas, called the Denton Stakeholder Drilling Advisory Group.

"We can't test to see what is coming into the environment," says Mr. Briggie, 35, who also works as an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of North Texas in Denton. "If frack fluids are so harmless, why do they hold onto these trade secrets so strongly?"

When Texas lawmakers were debating the disclosure bill, industry lobbyists made it clear that they wanted strong trade-secret protections, "but they didn't say it would be this heavily utilized," said Cyrus Reed, acting director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter, who worked with companies to develop the rule. "It is disappointing to see this many trade secrets being claimed."

The law was signed by Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, in June 2011.

Oil and gas companies are permitted to withhold disclosure of chemicals and their concentrations in any product that they claim to be a trade secret under the Texas law. Such claims can be challenged by state regulators and landowners of well sites or adjacent parcels.

Several other states that require disclosure of fracking chemicals -- including Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico and North Dakota -- also leave it up to energy companies to determine what chemicals can be labeled secrets.

Recently, more states are following the Texas model -- with an assist from industry. In December 2011, the American Legislative Exchange Council, a Washington-based public policy organization that brings together corporations and legislators to craft bills for states, adopted model legislation that is almost identical to the Texas rule.

The model bill was sponsored inside ALEC by Exxon Mobil Corp., which also advises the council from a seat on its "private enterprise board," according to ALEC documents obtained by Common Cause, a nonprofit in Washington.

So far, legislators in eight states have proposed bills based at least in part on the ALEC model, according to Todd Wynn, the director of the organization's task force on energy, environment and agriculture.

The main author of the Texas bill said other states will tailor the language to their needs.

"Can it be better, and should it be better?" said State Rep. Jim Keffer, a Republican. "Yes, and I think it will be better. People are going to use this bill as a base and then make it fit their state's attitude or their industry."

His Democratic co-author disagreed. It would be "a horrible mistake" for other states to use the Texas bill as a blueprint, Mr. Burnam said.

"Texas state government has been a wholly owned subsidiary of national oil and gas interests for a century," he says. "Do not look at it for guidance on anything related to protecting public health and safety."

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EPA & Hydraulic Fracturing - Dec. 3

**Trade-secret rules weaken fracking law; Texas allows exemptions from disclosure
Edmonton Journal, The**

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A subsidiary of Nabors Industries Ltd. pumped a mixture of chemicals identified only as "EXP-F0173-11" into a half-dozen oil wells in rural Karnes County, Texas, in July.

Few people outside Nabors, the largest onshore drilling contractor by revenue, know exactly what's in that blend. This much is clear: One ingredient, an unidentified solvent, can cause damage to the kidney and liver, according to safety information about the product that Michigan state regulators have on file.

A year-old Texas law that requires drillers to disclose chemicals they pump underground during hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," was powerless to compel transparency for EXP-F0173-11. The solvent and several other ingredients in the product are considered a trade secret by Superior Well Services, the Nabors subsidiary. That means they're exempt from disclosure.

Drilling companies in Texas, the biggest oil-and-natural gas producing state, claimed similar exemptions about 19,000 times this year through August, according to their chemical-disclosure reports. Data from the documents were compiled by Pivot Upstream Group, a Houston-based firm that studies the energy industry, and analyzed by Bloomberg News. Throughout the U.S., companies withheld one out of every five chemicals they used in fracking, a separate examination of a broader database shows.

Trade-secret exemptions block information on more than five ingredients for every well in Texas, undermining the statute's purpose of informing people about chemicals that are hauled through their communities and injected thousands of metres beneath their homes and farms, said Lon Burnam, a Democratic state representative and a coauthor of the law.

"This disclosure bill has a hole big enough to drive a Mack truck through," Burnam says of the law, which he called "much compromised legislation."

The Texas disclosure bill marks a growing effort by the oil and gas industry to address public concerns about fracking, a drilling technique in which millions of litres of water, sand and chemicals are pumped underground to free up more hydrocarbons. While the method has unlocked vast new sources of energy, safety questions centre on the hundreds of chemicals used - many of them known carcinogens. The U.S. federal Environmental Protection Agency has little authority to regulate fracking; Congress decided in 2005 that the bureau wouldn't oversee the practice.

The 2010 documentary film Gasland showed homeowners near fracked wells igniting the water that flowed from their faucets. A year later, the EPA linked fracking to contaminated drinking water in Pavillion, Wyo. The agency is retesting the Wyoming wells. A separate report from the U.S. Geological Survey this year confirmed the environmental agency's initial finding; it detected levels of methane, ethane, diesel compounds and phenol, which the EPA had identified in 2011.

Companies, including Houston-based Halliburton Co., have embraced the Texas law as a model that "provides an enormous amount of information to the general public" while protecting trade secrets from competitors, said Susie McMichael, a company spokeswoman.

Mladen Antonov, AFP, Getty Images / While fracking has unlocked vast new energy sources, many of the chemicals used in the process are known carcinogens.;

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